Handling Digital Photos

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Handling digital photos is a multi-step process. This handout assumes you have a digital camera in hand, and want to load photos from the camera onto your computer. We will work through several steps:

1. Finding the owner's manual for your camera from the manufacturer's website.
2. Learning how to connect your camera to the computer.
3. Learning to navigate Windows so you can locate the manual you downloaded, and the pictures you'll be putting on your PC.
4. Learning to read your computer screen and follow on-screen prompts that appear after you plug your camera into the computer.

Along with the topics listed above, we will use the Baldwinsville Public Library's Downloads Page for tutorials locating files in Windows and editing your photos using the Irfanview software.

The first rule whenever you purchase a digital device is to save the box that it came in, along with any wires, connectors, discs and documentation. Electronic devices today may come with proprietary connectors that can be very difficult to replace. Many device manufacturers no longer provide owners manuals when you purchase an item. If you really want to learn how to use your digital camera you will need a copy of the owner's manual.   It is important to understand the difference between a *Quick-Start Guide* and a *User Manual*. Quick-Start guides contain just the information you need to take the camera out of the box and start taking pictures. Quick-Start guides are not comprehensive.

To find the owner's manual for your camera you first need to know the manufacturer and model number. This information usually appears somewhere on the camera itself, or on the box that the camera was sold in. Notice how in the example to the right, you can see the model name on the box in the lower right hand corner. In the examle at the top of the next page, you can see the model number "S860" printed right on the body of the camera.

In this example the name of the camera appears on the box that the camera was sold in.

Notice how in this example, the model name of the camera- "S860" -is printed right on the camera body.

To find the owner's manual for your camera you should Google the exact model name of the camera, followed by the phrase "owner's manual", the manual for your camera will almost always appear on the first page of results. Using our example at the left, if you had a Samsung S860 camera and were searching for a manual you'd enter the search string: "Samsung S860 Owner's Manual".

Once you've found the manual for your camera there will usually be a "Download" button that you can push to obtain the file. Never follow a download link that isn't on the official website for your camera's manufacturer. If you have a Canon camera, you should download the manual from the Canon website; if you have a Minolta, you should be on the Minolta website, etc. There are many websites that claim to offer owners manuals, and will ask for your credit card information. Those websites are known as "Phishing Scams", and the people trying to get your credit card information are criminals. You should never have to pay for an owner's manual. Most manufacturers distribute these documents for free, and a handful of manufacturers will ask you to enter a validation code that appears on a proof of purchase slip that will be inside the box the camera was sold in. Also, if you end up on a site claiming to offer Owner's or User's manuals and your computer shows a popup that asks if you'd like to download "ilivid.exe" then hit the "No" button, close up the web-page you're on and look for the manual elsewhere. The "ilivid.exe" virus has already infected millions of computers worldwide and it will infect yours if you click "Yes".

Getting Photos from the Camera Onto Your Computer

Please note this is a general description of this process and the steps for your particular camera may vary. If you are feeling uncertain about this process you should refer to the owner's manual you downloadedin the first part of this tutorial.

Most consumer digital cameras follow a series of steps very similar to the one outlined here.

Before plugging your camera in be sure the camera is turned off.

1. Connect your digital camera to your computer using the mini-USB to USB cable that came with your digital camera. The smaller end will plug in somewhere on the body of your digital camera. Sometimes the plug on the camera will be covered by a small rubber flap that's designed to prevent residue from getting into the connector.

   This is what the connectors on the ends of a mini-USB to USB cable look like.

   The USB-mini connector on your camera should look like this.

2. Plug the larger end of the cable into one of the USB ports on your computer, then push the power button on your camera. Most digital cameras will automatically install software, including a picture downloading tool. Read through each of the screens as you're installing the software. Make sure you take note of where the software wants to put your pictures. Some cameras will automatically put images from your camera into the MyPictures folder, while others will create another folder that you could have trouble locating if you don't keep notes during the software installation process.

3. After the software is done installing, and every time you plug in the camera after that, a "Photo Import Tool" should open, which will show you the images on the camera, and allow you to mark a check-box if you want to import that picture from the camera. Once you've checked the boxes for the photos you'd like to import, there will be an *Import* or *OK* button that will import the photos from the camera for you.

4. Look for the folder where your pictures were imported. If you need help, please refer to the Finding Your Downloads handout on the Bville Downloads page at http://www.bville.lib.ny.us/content/pdf_handouts/

Additional Topics

Additional topics are covered in handouts that are available from the Baldwinsville Public Library's *Public Downloads* page. To get to the Public Downloads page go to the Baldwinsville Library website at http://www.bville.lib.ny.us and scroll down to the bottom of the page, then click on the green text that reads: Baldwinsville Public Library Downloads Page. You can also get to that page by typing into your address bar: http://www.bville.lib.ny.us/content/pdf_handouts/home.html.

Handouts related to digital cameras and photos include:

Basic Image Editing with Irfanview: shows some basics about how to get and use the popular Irfanview graphics editing software

E-mail Basics: includes a description of how to attach photos to an e-mail

Finding Your Downloads: describes how to locate items in the Windows File System

Photography 101: links to photo archives and articles on photographic techniques

Sharing Digital Photos

Here are links to instructions for three methods of sharing photos: sending an e-mail with a digital photo attached, posting photos to the on-line photo sharing service Flickr and using the on-line card, print and invitation ordering site Snapfish.

Sending e-mails with digital photos attached

Below are several tutorials that discuss how to send an e-mail. If you look at the first tutorial but still don't feel like you're ready to get started then go ahead and check out the second and third. For this process, it is helpful to have the *Finding Your Downloads* handout close at hand.

http://lifehacker.com/5803366/how-to-send-an-email-with-an-attachment-for-beginners

http://www.learnthenet.com/how-to/attach-files-to-email/

http://www.computerhope.com/issues/ch000887.htm

Sharing Photos with Flickr

Flickr is a popular site for sharing your digital photos. Visit the Flickr *Tour* and *FAQ* ("faq" stands for "Frequently Asked Questions") for help getting started.

http://www.flickr.com/tour

http://www.flickr.com/help/faq/

Prints and Invitations with Snapfish

Snapfish is a site that takes your digital photos, and uses them to create prints, calendars, invitations and other personalized documents. The services offered by Snapfish are extensive. Here's a link to their photo products list to give you an idea of their range of services.

http://www.snapfish.com/snapfish/photo-gifts/store

Here's an index of How-To documents on the Snapfish website

http://www.snapfish.com/snapfish/photolibrary